



July / August 2014

# The Dredging *Link*

## Joint Summer Internship Program

This summer, the partners at Masonville Cove hosted the first participants in the inaugural Joint Summer Internship program. The eight-week program provides students from the Baltimore area with unique hands-on experience in conservation and education.

The 2014 interns participated in educational programming at the Masonville Cove Environment Education Center, shark tagging in Ocean City as part of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Apex Predator Program, osprey banding with naturalist Greg Kerns at Patuxent River Park, and invasive species monitoring and removal at the Patuxent Research Refuge. They also worked with staff from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Chesapeake Bay Field Office and toured terminals at the Maryland Port Administration.

The program accepted three students as summer interns for 2014.

Imani Kersey is a sophomore at Catholic University of America in Washington, DC, majoring in Business and Spanish. Imani has an interest in working for or owning a green energy business one day. She is a former student of Aquarium on Wheels, an award-winning program for Baltimore-area high school students sponsored by the National Aquarium.

Rian Fleming is a sophomore at Towson University studying Environmental Science. She has a strong interest in conservation and ecology and was a former student of the National Aquarium's Henry Hall Program,



*Interns assisted with environmental program activities at Masonville*

which provides free educational opportunities for students and graduates of Baltimore City Public Schools.

Julian Whitley, a junior at University of Maryland College Park, is studying Environmental Science. His career interests are wildlife management and public outreach.

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Masonville Cove welcomed more than 100 volunteers on Saturday, June 28, for the National Aquarium's first "BioBlitz."

A BioBlitz is an all-day event where scientists, naturalists, students, teachers, families, and other volunteers work together to find, identify, and record as many living organisms as they can. Together, they collect useful data on biodiversity while learning more about local wildlife and the role of citizen science.

The BioBlitz at Masonville Cove recorded 350 observations and identified more than 169 species, including fungi, reptiles, amphibians, birds, mammals, fish, insects, arachnids, plants, and invertebrates. Volunteers were especially excited to discover two large snapping turtles, two red-bellied cooters, a few red-eared sliders, two American eels, and painted turtles.

Approximately 53 percent of the documented species were plants, followed by insects at roughly 30 percent and birds at 12 percent. The data will be shared with the larger Maryland Biodiversity Project.

Funds to support the BioBlitz were provided by the Maryland Port Administration, Constellation Energy, and the Chesapeake Bay Trust.

*Participant at the insect table  
Courtesy of Jillie Drutz*



*Snapping Turtle courtesy of  
Tami Elizabeth Bentz*

The inaugural class of interns from this summer's Joint Conservation Internship Program gave their final presentation to family and partners July 31 at the Aquarium. Partners from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Aquarium, Port and Living Classrooms were impressed to learn all the opportunities interns had this summer, including habitat conservation, shark tagging, osprey banding and more!

## WRRDA Passes – Finally!

The U.S. Congress has passed and President Obama has signed an act of critical legislation that brings good news for the Port of Baltimore.

The Water Resources Restoration and Development Act of 2014 (WRRDA, formerly known as the WRDA) authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to undertake important dredging and maintenance projects in harbors and channels around the United States.

Historically, Congress has passed this act every two years, but the 2014 legislation is the first in the last seven years. This means that there was a tremendous backlog of projects awaiting authorization. Once projects are authorized, they are then eligible for consideration in the appropriation process, whereby federal dollars are made available to the Corps to implement projects.

Maryland succeeded in having key projects authorized. First, ongoing work and the proposed expansion at Poplar Island were reauthorized at a level of \$1.2 billion. Key to this action is the restoration of the federal/state cost share ratio of 75 percent/25 percent (a federal/state split). The cost share ratio had previously been set at 65 percent/35 percent, which was not advantageous to Maryland.

The Mid Bay project also won authorization at the level of \$1.9 billion. This project will enable the restoration of 2,000 acres of the eroded James Island off of Dorchester County, as well as environmental restoration of Barren Island. James Island will provide capacity for millions of cubic yards of dredged material – capacity which will be needed to keep Bay channels at their authorized depth of 50 feet.

One of the exciting provisions of the legislation is the restoration of full utilization of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. This fund results from a fee paid by shippers and supports dredging and maintenance projects around the country. In recent years, as much as 50 percent of the revenue has been diverted from its intended purpose. Full funding will eventually ensure adequate resources for maintenance work as well as new projects in selected ports.

Full details on the WRRDA are available from the Maryland Department of Transportation at <http://transportation.house.gov/wrrda/>.

### Upcoming Events

September 20<sup>th</sup> - Bird Walk

7:00 am- 11:00 am

Cox Creek Dredged Material Containment Facility

1000 Kembo Road

Baltimore, MD 21226

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